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Food for Italy

FOR MONTHS now news despatches have been painting in the blackest colors the situation of the Italian people, particularly with regard to food. Mrs. McCormick of the New York *Times* told us about it last summer; the wise-cracking Mrs. Luce adds her testimony to the mountainous and depressing mass of what we have learned elswhere. She tells us that she saw the following legend painted upon a Roman wall —a legend which is not unfruitful for her politically: "Less Poletti, More Spaghetti." It's a good crack if it does not serve to conceal from our minds the misery which prompted it. For unquestionably the fact is that under Allied occupation thousands of Italians are starving to death.

The problem in Italy is made particularly difficult by the general infertility of the areas we occupy. What good land there is on the Italian Peninsula is mostly in the north; vast areas of the south will scarcely support food crops. In the wake of both the German and our own armies there lies an area of destruction which makes things even worse, since it has removed the facilities for storing and distributing food so essential in a region which does not produce what it eats. Mr. Harold MacMillan, British Resident Minister in the Central Mediterranean and recently appointed Acting President of the Allied Commission in Italy, has stated the situation vividly. "Had such ravages and such destruction of capital equipment of every kind taken place as the result of some natural phenomenon—an earthquake or tidal wave—even a peaceful world with its full complement of production available and all its shipping services at hand to bring remedial measures would have found it a long and laborious process to repair them." In time of war, of global war, shipping space is at a premium and necessary building materials unavailable.

And yet the prospect of people dying like flies after they have been "liberated" is so repellant and so paradoxical that one cannot give up in despair, and simply say, "Let them eat cake." Certainly there is a solemn duty incumbent upon all of us, *as nations,* to try to find a way out. In a despatch sent to the *Christian Science Monitor,* its correspondent, Mr. Walter Lucas, observes: "The bleak fact is that whatever may be the generous impulses of the Allies or however much in hard cash may have been collected for Italian relief by societies or individuals, this cash can be translated neither into enough goods nor enough shipping space for goods even if they were available in a world where the processes of production and the means of transportation are devoted primarily to prosecuting a global war." Again and again we confront the fact that the bottleneck we must break is the bottleneck of shipping. For despite Mr. Lucas, there is reason to believe that the goods exist. Certainly food exists in Latin America. There have recently been hints that certain stocks in England, which had been accumulated for use in the Scandinavian countries when liberated, might be used in Italy. Wheat, at least, which is the mainstay of spaghetti, exists in surplus quantities both here and in Canada.

It was reported that on January 4 President Roosevelt announced that between "15 and 29" ships have been discovered which can be made immediately available for carrying relief goods to Italy. This of course would not do much more than scratch the surface, but it would do that much. For if in other areas we fail as miserably in the simple matter of feeding as we have failed in Italy, we shall have gone a long way toward losing the peace.

The National Service Act Debate

AT THE time of the President's annual message to Congress a year ago, THE COMMONWEAL opposed the adoption of a National War Service Act. We have not altered our opinion that it is a last resort—a measure to be adopted only in case of necessity and when other and better means have been found unequal to the task. In what sense have conditions altered during the past twelve months to require so drastic an extension

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of the power of the State over the lives of all its citizens? Present labor shortages are regional in character; they do not total *at most* 300,000 men. With the cut-backs taking place in certain war industries and the thousands being discharged from the armed services each month, this hardly seems insuperable, considering the priority legislation and manpower system now in force.

It has yet to be demonstrated that so sweeping and drastic a national measure is or will be necessary. The strikes and other disturbances which did trouble the production picture somewhat a year ago are no longer of great account. But Army and Navy heads and many other Americans are still imbued with the notion that the way to get things done is to give orders, even if it should mean giving orders to the whole American people. It is a matter of opinion whether the enactment of universal service would give a great lift to the morale of our servicemen and deal such a blow to the hopes of the Germans and Japanese. That is the President's contention. But it might just as easily indicate that the American people were so little concerned about making sure of final victory that they had to be coerced into completing the job. In any case records of employment and production readily attainable by appeals to patriotism and other untried voluntary methods would provide far more conclusive evidence of civilian determination.

But the real reason for universal service now is said to be the future. The Army and the Navy men, who have been strong for the Austin-Wadsworth universal service bill all along, are fearful that they may need new weapons in a hurry. And Mr. Lippmann foresees a rush to civilian industry once the European war is liquidated; how then shall we produce enough to finish with Japan without the tragedy of unnecessary prolongation? The New York *Times* is so eager to put universal service through right now that it challenges the Congress to equal or surpass the speed with which it enacted Lend-Lease a full four years ago. Yet there is a much better way of obviating these fears of future labor shortages. Adequate provision for the war worker's transfer to peace-time employment after the cessation of hostilities—providing the transportation, training facilities, unemployment benefits and other adjustments included in last year's defeated Murray-Kilgore Bill, would prevent the labor shortages so greatly feared for the future, particularly after V-E Day. The American worker is patriotic; he cannot be blamed for concern about the future of his family; and if he has the assurance which legislation similar to the Murray-Kilgore Bill would rightfully provide, there would be no reason for fearing labor shortages in our critical industries as the war progresses. A universal service act goes at an admittedly vital problem the wrong way round.

The Ghost of Dies

SUBSTANTIALLY the first act of the new Congress was to renew the Committee which has principally been identified in the public mind with former Congressman Dies of Texas. Not only was this Committee renewed, its status was advanced to that of permanent standing committee.

The old Dies Committee established quite a reputation as a prosecutor of "subversives" of the Left. It accomplished something in its exposures of the Bund and of Earl Browder. But what properly qualified it for the scorn of all its critics was its disgraceful method of procedure. Its partiality was constantly evident; its personnel was generally of low calibre. The result was that an atmosphere of witch-hunting surrounded everything it did, and its extravagant findings were used to blast reputations and to deprive decent citizens of their livelihoods.

What is essential, then, is that in the new Committee, which will shortly be constituted, able and judicious men take the place of the unjudicious, prejudiced brow-beaters we have known so well during the past several years. In today's political world, truly subversive activities are all too likely to continue. Methods of investigation must not themselves run counter to the American ideal, to American traditions of justice and fair play or that investigation can itself become subversive.

The author of a feature article in the January 19 issue, a Contributing Editor, was advised at the last moment that its publication would be highly prejudicial to him personally. Although we are convinced that nothing in the article would have been prejudicial to THE COMMONWEAL, *upon the author's urgent request we withheld that issue from distribution, even though it was already printed. We regret this unforeseen interruption, and assure regular readers that all subscriptions will be extended for one issue to compensate.*

The Abyss

YOU DO not see it unless you are looking for it; the train does not slow down and, unless you are sitting on the river side of the train and watching, you can go past Sing Sing prison without seeing it. Even if you do watch you only see the rising walls as if the train were approaching a tunnel, the sentry boxes on top of the walls and then, immediately, the river again—the ice floes in winter—the gray cold waters and the hills across the river. The commuters read the paper; they do not look at the prison. Even if you look at the prison you do not know what manner of men are in the prison. That is in general. You would not want to judge them in general. Of

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course you know that some men are in there who have tortured other men, who have murdered other men. They have been arrested, tried, judged by those people whose duty it is to do that sort of thing. They are apart now from the world. Almost it seems courteous not to look at the prison. Just as it has always seemed courteous to cross to the other side of the street when the patrol wagon has stopped outside a house and there is a little group of people standing there waiting to see the man walk out of the house between the policemen and there is just a moment when he stands in the street and then the policemen help him up the step into the wagon. Also sometimes in a station you see a man handcuffed to an officer going to or leaving a train and it always seems courteous to pretend that you have not seen anything unusual. Once, in Boston, in the lobby of a hotel, there was a procession of men with an officer leading the procession and an officer at the end of the procession and it was very embarrassing until you understood that it was a jury out for lunch.

Courteous may not be the word. You are wandering about in an area of revulsion and shock and pity also, and if it always seems preferable to get out of it as rapidly as possible perhaps it is best not to insist on the idea of courtesy. And it is also true that you never know the facts: the murdered woman was not your sister; they did not torture her before your eyes; and no matter what the newspaper account may have given there is still uncertainty. It still is possible to turn aside. It is only through fiction that we see into the soul and then we are held in the disaster, in all the preparation of the disaster, and its consequences. It is through Dostoievsky or through Faulkner that we abandon all courtesy; we stare, we are responsible, we can find no escape.

Years, years ago, through Malraux we knew about China; the others would be waiting their turn; a locomotive stood outside the prison; each time the whistle blew it meant that the soldiers had thrown a living man into the firebox of the locomotive. Then they would pull the whistle and wait a moment; then it would be another man's turn. We never thought of forgetting that; it was not something one could expect to forget or find any justification in seeking to forget.

You do not have to read a book but sometimes you get caught by a book. You get caught by the atrocities in a book. If the book is well written; if the atrocities are not just a list of atrocities. Especially if they are not called atrocities. You get caught; your experience is enlarged, even if you did not want to have it enlarged. And then afterwards, always, it is impossible for you to look at the world as you looked at it before. Before you knew what men could do to men. Before you knew about cruelty. But when you know something about cruelty you do not necessarily want to know more about cruelty.

In war it is better to think about the brave than about the cruel. It would be very wonderful if we could do so always. If we could get through the war thinking only about the brave. Since the great books about the war will not be written until after the war it may be possible for us, in America, to think about whatever we please until after the war is ended. Only there is this difficulty. When we get through thinking about the brave, and even if we think also about those everywhere who are suffering, we shall still one day have to face what the cruel have done. Because what takes place in our minds, what we admit into our minds and our hearts is one thing; what is taking place in Europe is another.

Wherever the Germans have gone they have acted with great cruelty. They have tortured men and women to obtain evidence. In the occupied countries. (You see, whenever you start saying what they have done it seems impossible to write. Because we have tried to keep what they have done out of our minds. Because we thought the war against them was enough, the bravery of our soldiers fighting them sufficient, and that, when we had won the war, other people might have to remember the cruelty but there would be no more cruelty then and we would never have had to know too much about it.) The Germans have been very cruel to the people in the occupied countries but we have not thought it necessary to admit all the evidence of their cruelty into our minds. At the most we have thought that there was a problem of punishment. We have been arguing about that. We thought that was all there was to argue about.

We thought that the cruelty was all German and that when the Germans were defeated there would be an end to cruelty. That is what has been in our minds but our minds are not Europe. The cruelty which we have refused to admit, Europe has been unable to reject. Europe is suffering from the contagion of cruelty. The Germans have left cruelty in Europe and when they have been driven out of all the Europe they invaded, the cruelty they brought with them is remaining behind them. After they have gone away. As if they had brought a disease. The concentration camp is remaining as a habit of Europe, as a convenience which has in it nothing remarkable or conspicuously objectionable; the police methods of torture are remaining, because they have been so efficient; the fear the Germans brought they have not taken it way with them. So that all in Europe who have been in the war stand at the edge of an abyss. Of cruelty. And, of course, if they stand there so do we—a little further from the edge. Whatever we refuse to consider.

C. G. PAULDING.

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Two Notes on Europe

A Belgian journalist writes of America and Europe

Jan-Albert Goris

AT THE present moment it is already clear that the major post-war problem will not be how we will live in the same world together with a defeated Germany, but how the victorious nations will live among themselves. After the elimination of the Reich as a menace to international peace, will the earth still be big enough to allow a peaceful intercourse between nations, or are we going to witness an opposition between continents instead of conflicts between nations?

In the future, the relations between America and Europe will be one of the determining factors of the international atmosphere. Not only the purely political relations, but also the sentimental and intellectual contacts. As long as the United States had not come of age politically and mentally, as long as the development of America proper was an absorbing enough task to command all the energies of the nation, as long as one could "go West," it was possible and logical for Americans to regard Europe merely as an antique shop. It was understandable also that Europe wanted to ignore the intellectual aspects of a pioneer country and frontier atmosphere, the like of which it had experienced about a thousand years before. That is all over now. Although reluctantly, Europe has discovered that there is an American culture, something besides the academic niceties of Longfellow and the pseudo-English brand of literature. It has found out that America has a message of her own.

On the other hand, America has relinquished the attitude of unrestricted admiration for everything European in the spiritual and intellectual field which, for quite some time, had seemed to be the indispensable attitude of the intelligentsia on this side of the globe.

Therefore it could be supposed that there never was a better time to intensify contacts between the two continents on a normal basis, one of esteem and mutual understanding.

However, those who have studied carefully the evolution of the occupied territories and subsequently followed the course of events after their liberation, already know that in each and every one of them the national spirit and the pride in national achievements have considerably increased. Forced as they were to defend their local patrimonium against the oppressors, they were brought to accentuate the importance and the excellence of their own spiritual values. Besides, they were entirely cut off from the outside world as a means of comparison. Every occupied country was driven back to those elements in its character that distinguish it most clearly from other countries. Out of necessity they have become extremely provincial.

It will be quite a task to renew the contacts which existed before the war. It will be an even more delicate enterprise to enlarge them.

The OWI has already taken up part of this burden. A number of American books have been translated and are being sent to the liberated countries. The idea is excellent, although the choice of the books may provoke some critical comments. It is old wisdom to learn from one's enemies. What have the Germans done to damage America in the eyes and hearts of the occupied peoples? Of course, they banished all books by Lewis, Hemingway, Buck, etc., but they purposely pushed the sales of John Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath" because it gave them a wonderful chance to underline what they interpreted as typical social conditions in the U. S. A.

If the American Government wants to make America known in Europe, it should first of all counteract German propaganda by presenting a fair picture of American everyday life. It should not try to depict America as a utopia, for no intelligent European would believe America to be one: an honest presentation of American achievements and problems is required.

The initiative of the OWI in that field has already provoked some interesting reactions. In Belgium, the public—and the publishers as well—have welcomed the arrival of American books in translation, but they have asked what would be the counterpart. They want to know whether America will welcome literary and intellectual publications from Belgium in the U. S. A. They are conscious of the fact that they have something worthwhile to say to the Americans, and they want to do it as well and as soon as possible. The means of which small countries like Belgium and Holland dispose in order to propagate their literary and spiritual achievements are infinitely inferior to those at the disposal of the Americans.

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An agreement should be reached on this point.

However provincial they may have become in their preoccupations, the peoples of Europe know that contact with America will bring them something refreshing, something they cannot find any more in Europe. Only a few days ago, 800 people out of 1,100 died when a robot bomb came down on a moviehouse in Antwerp. For the first time in four years there was a typical "Western" on the program, with lots of shooting, hold-ups and rough-riding. Eight hundred people paid with their lives for their craving for a kind of escape only America can offer. Even under the constant menace of death, people were willing to take up again their spiritual contacts with America where they left off in 1940. It may not have been the highest form of American spirituality they craved, but in their modest way they rendered homage to some characteristics of the American mind and heart which will always endear this country to all freedom-loving people.

It depends not only on the governments, but also on the peoples of America and Europe that Rabelais's misanthropic complaint, "one half of the world ignores how the other half lives," may become an obsolete statement. For the peace of the world it is imperative that this should be so.

II*

THE dry soil of Mesopotamia kept, for our modern curiosity, the tablets on which the overlords of Babylon wrote their cuneiform orders to their officers and to the keepers of their granaries, but it also preserved for us the many fragments of that oldest and most pessimistic of great epics, the Gilgamesh poem, which scarcely anybody reads and which is one of the most moving books man has ever written. Little more is left of the powerful empires those people built. It is enough. An empire has gone, a civilization has crumbled, but we reaped the crumbs.

In Central America the white man destroyed the ancient culture of the Mayas and the Aztecs. The jungle and the forests covered its pyramids, its huge statues of man-eating idols, its sun terraces and the highly colored pageant of Indian life, with its grimacing, inhuman heroes and cruel gods. Little is left of the Mexican and Peruvian civilization, little of it lives in us, but it keeps coming back all the time, and one day it may be a real part of our common cultural heritage.

There seem to be no lost cultures. Whenever man does something worth his while it is bound some day to flourish, to embellish and enrich the world and its inhabitants. We are told to weep over fallen empires and lost civilizations. Nobody should weep over an empire. It is a political structure and therefore a thing subject to changes and adaptable to circumstances. There are no lost civilizations. If they are of any significance, if they have any message at all, they spread out, they expand into less advanced territories; intellectual and cultural endosmosis is a constant and marvelous reality.

The smallest millinery shop in a Midwestern tank town will call itself The Bon Ton, as homage to the France of the seventeenth century, the culture of which dominated Europe. The politico will proclaim that he stands for the rights of "hoi polloi," and confess by those words our indebtedness to Greece for all our political concepts. France does not rule the continent any more, neither has Greece any great power, but the good they once did lives long after their moment of material supremacy is past.

For many decades prophets of gloom and doom have been busy predicting that Europe was going to die. All around us we hear that the British Empire is tottering, and people who otherwise would not even hurt a mosquito are indignant that it does not fall right away.

If the British Empire has to fall, it will do so for the good reason that when something has outlived its usefulness it withers away and decomposes, but a living body is able to adapt and transform itself, to survive by evolution. Before prophesying on that point one should be able to estimate to what extent that Empire lives in the heart of the members of the Commonwealth.

As for Europe, it has been solemnly casketed and buried by that scholarly German gravedigger Oswald Spengler, and, long before him, by quite a number of Americans who wrote on the subject, and implicitly by all the immigrants from Europe who turned their backs on that Asiatic peninsula and renounced her once and for all. For all of them Europe had died; they even refused to look back at her sickbed, but rushed to the wide-open arms of that wonderful stout lady in the nightgown who in New York's harbor proclaims:

> Give me your tired, your poor,
> Your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free . . . .

and whose sweet name is Liberty.

Now more than ever men think and say that Europe is done for, Europe is dying. Civil war has ravaged Spain, the greatest of all wars sweeps over the whole European continent, leaving only four steppingstones over that torrent of blood and horrors, Portugal, Switzerland, Sweden, and Eire. The loveliest monuments are demolished by only a few bombs, the great cities are laid waste, irreplaceable beauty goes up in smoke and ashes. That which made Europe so attractive to foreigners, its picturesque appeal, is rapidly dis-

* What follows will appear next month in Mr. Goris's "Strangers Should Not Whisper" (L. B. Fischer. New York. $2.75) under the chapter heading, "Europe Will Never Die."

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appearing. Tourists will not come any more except to visit the ruins. Europe is so prostrated that she will not recover. "Thus speaketh the fool in his ignorance."

Certainly Europe is ugly-looking; she is no longer the luscious beauty the mythical bull Jupiter carried away. Her looks are not so good. A few months before the war an American woman visited provincial England. She came back and wrote a book (most of them do, and some even do it well) in which she said that she had studied the English young people in the village pubs. She announced that they were physical wrecks and that they all had badly neglected teeth. She concluded that the English people would go under at the first attack.

Her appraisal of the situation is typical of that specific Greek trend of mind a great number of Americans have come to consider as an ideal —not to cultivate the excellence of the mind or the perfection of the body alone (except for women), but to require that man should have both and be as careful about conserving or improving his brains as his looks. If Socrates had been handsomer, he might not have been condemned to death. The good-looking man on this continent is always 50 per cent right. Europe is not good-looking any more, nor were the teeth of the young Englishmen, but the history of these last few years proves that both still can bite.

Europe will never die, for Europe is a powerhouse and a melting pot of spiritual values the the like of which exists nowhere else. You can bring here the best of each country, and it is fortunate that you do, but for one generation at least it will be eccentric, foreign and accidental. Because a culture's greatness grows out of the apparent waste which accompanies it, because for every great painter it produces there have been hundreds of mediocre painters and thousands of week-end artists. For every great author there have been millions of passable, insignificant or silly books. For every cathedral built there have been erected thousands of annoying ogival monstrosities. You can derive great enjoyment from the isolated masterpiece, but to appreciate it to the full one must still hear in the background the rumbling echo of all the attempts that failed, of all the partial successes, of all the approximations and near-masterpieces.

In Europe alone do people have time to devote to all this. In Europe alone people do not believe that they have the right to be happy. They are sad with experience and therefore humble when confronted with real happiness. Their art, their culture, expresses their amazement that anybody on this earth could be happy for more than a few hours at a time. They are the professional pessimists in this world of ours, as Americans are the persistent optimists.

They may be reduced to a second-rate position, economically and politically; they never will be so reduced morally or spiritually, for every country in Europe has its word to say, in its own way. The statesmen of the early nineteenth century spoke of "the concert of nations," of "le concert européen." They were right: the sound Europe makes is the sound of a concert, with its basses, its cellos, its flutes and its triangles. You need every one of them; none of them is useless. Europe's cultural history is much like Ravel's "Bolero": the melody is always the same, but each time it is repeated another instrument comes to the fore and interprets in its own way the basic motive. So through the ages every European country has in its turn dominated the concert and influenced all the others. That melody will never end.

It is Europe's task to tell the world that there comes an end to the sunniest day, that this lovely earth is a vale of tears, that the beauty and the beast both have to die an ugly death, that life is an interlude, an introduction and a trial. Those things should be said. Europe alone has pondered over them for centuries, and ever so often, in some obscure corner of that continent, somebody stands up, using perhaps a little-known language, and utters the same old truths with a new voice. It echoes all over the world.

Millions of people have died in Europe; millions have been slaughtered. Those who escaped from that hell and witnessed the sufferings and crimes must have a message for the rest of the universe. It would be unbearable to think that the shouts of anguish and terror of the fourteen hundred Jews who were pushed into a synagogue in Lodz and burned alive there would not have an echo in the spiritual life of the world. It would be unbearable to think that out of the monstrous crimes committed by the Nazis there would be no flowering of mercy. The Spanish civil war gave us the fantastic story of the Toledo Alcazar: seldom have human greatness and human cruelty been demonstrated more vividly by both sides engaged in the fight. The history of Europe, old and new, is full of these incidents which tell us clearly to what depths we can descend, what heights we can reach.

Europe has been destroyed and maltreated a dozen times at least. It has always survived: it has even given birth to a new world which is now guiding and leading the people. It is diversified and rich; it is full of surprises and potentialities. It will not and cannot any more dominate the universe materially, but everywhere in the world people who want to "understand the reason of things," *rerum cognoscere causas,* will always listen to the lament from over the ocean, to the pathetic complaint of the victims as well as to that single great song of hope Europe produced,

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not the proclamation of a certainty but the expression of an age-old longing, Beethoven's "Hymn to Joy," which rose out of uncounted miseries and trials.

It is very wonderful to read Mr. Goris and to have this evidence of the European will to live, this affirmation of confidence in life, this certainty. This self-confidence. This self-assurance. It is wonderful to see that after all that has happened there should still exist in Europe this will to endure and this pride. This nobility. This certainty which denies death: "There seem to be no lost cultures. . . . There are no lost civilizations." This certainty which is not afraid of any cold images of death, and Mr. Goris uses the word Maya, the word Aztec, and he does not tremble to see these words next to the word Europe.

We Americans tremble. It is precisely in such a juxtaposition of the idea of death and the idea of life that we find the reason for the war. It was to prevent a civilization from death that we are in the war—agonizedly—for the war brings with it the danger of civilization dying another death. Mr. Goris says that we are the "persistent optimists." Yet even so we have trembled at the thought that Europe might perish. And in this war which is destroying so much we have trembled at the thought that we may be destroying too much. We would find no reassurance (equipped with all the optimism in the world) in the thought that European civilization would survive, as the Mayan or the Aztec civilizations have survived. Or as North Africa has survived after Carthage: the fields are deserts; the temples are ruins, White Fathers are missionaries where Saint Augustine lived. We would find no reassurance in the thought that Europe might survive in Australia, or in New Caledonia, or even in the United States. Such a survival would count for the world; it would not be Europe's survival. We could not be happy with the cathedrals and the parish churches of Europe surviving in photomontage at the Museum of Modern Art; Versailles and the Guild Houses of Brussels surviving at the Metropolitan; the library of Louvain completely preserved in micro-film in the Public Library at 42nd St.—or even if everything were to be rebuilt, in Arizona, complete with artists and students, priests and parishioners. This would not be sufficient—even if we were the new Athens, the new Rome, the new Paris, the new Europe. It is European civilization incarnated that is to be saved or lost, standing now in the midst of war and immensely in peril. In death, the soul goes to God, and the souls of all the villagers of Ouradour have gone to God, and the habits of these villagers, their civilization,—the way they baked the bread—have been preserved by other living Frenchmen; but the villagers are dead, the village is dead. In that sense, through starvation, disease, execution, destruction—repeated and continuing destruction—Europe is in peril of dying.

That is the cruel dilemma of war: there is this war which is fought to save Europe and which exposes Europe to death. THE EDITORS.

Von Hügel on the German Soul

T. S. K. SCOTT-CRAIG

I WAS tremendously refreshed the other day after picking up and glancing through two essays* which Baron von Hügel wrote in the almost prehistoric days before the United States entered the First World War. They suffer from his peculiarly contorted though careful style; and in quoting him I shall make many unrecorded omissions; but what remains is a vision of the German problem unequalled by any contemporary analysis. We have a feverish desire to avoid the mistakes of "last time"; and an almost equally feverish desire to avoid making new ones. Perhaps it will calm us a little to recall what the great Scots-Austrian was proposing thirty years ago.

He was quite clear that something approaching "unconditional surrender" was a necessary preliminary to a better order:

> It is Germany's reputation of ultimate physical irresistibility that is now evidently dear above all to the average German; only a very clear failure of these pretensions will make him change his mind. . . . All thoughts of any peace stopping short of great victory mean the abandonment of the attempt to furnish the starting-point for Germany's regeneration.

And the Germany to be beaten was not just the living generation, but the "militarist Absolutism and feverish Pan-Germanism increasingly dominant during the last three generations"; and back of that too a gloomy and humorless tradition in both philosophy and religion. "Any just observer would have to admit the apparent absence of all check exercised by their religion upon the 'realistic' affinities so markedly revealed by the German Roman Catholic clergy generally and by the laity of the great Centre Party."

And he quotes the outstanding Lutheran pastor and politician Naumann as writing, "How am I to say that Bismarck's preparations for the Schleswig-Holstein War were a service in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ? I cannot manage to do so. Yet all the same, I admire these preparations . . . Bismarck did his duty . . . the cultivation of power." Naumann had been influenced by

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* "The German Soul in Its Attitude towards Ethics and Christianity, the State and War: Two Studies." F. von Hügel. Dutton, 1916.

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Darwin, but then he was in a position to be so influenced:

> Luther's *pecca fortiter* answer to Philip of Saxony's case of conscience; his inflammatory instigation to revolt of the poor German serf peasantry, and then, when their revolt came, his adjuration to the German Protestant princes to "brain them, as so many mad dogs"; these are but specimens of a brutality which has helped to endear Luther to a large section even of the educated German public.

The humorless systematizing of a Fichte or even of a Kant opens yet another avenue to egoism:

> "A German," wrote Fichte, "who learns Latin more thoroughly than does a foreigner (a thing he may well achieve), thereby attains to a far more thorough understanding of the neo-Latin language than is possessed by this foreigner who speaks it. . . ; between life and death there is no comparison, and hence all direct comparisons between the German and the neo-Latin languages are utterly futile." Just think one moment. Here is one of the chief German philosophers in the full maturity of his powers, teaching equivalently, throughout a long course of public lectures, that Dante was hopelessly debarred from finding the depths of his own soul, and that the deathless "Divina Commedia" seriously profited mankind only as a stimulus to Klopstock in the composition of his still-born 'Messias'!
>
> Then there is Kant's, the old bachelor's, detailed instructions to his students as to the suckling, swathing, cradling, weaning of infants. And still more the highly significant reason he assigns for such preposterous meddling—that many of his hearers would become tutors in private families, and that "it happens at times that further children are born in the house, and that a tactful tutor can aspire to be the confidant of the parents and to be consulted by them also with respect to the physical education of such children, and this also because one is, often, the only *Gelehrte* in the house."

Von Hügel would seem to be building up a case against the Germans as terrible as the newspaper accounts of atrocities of Lord Vansittart's catalogue of historic crimes; but he is careful to balance his indictment with a fair account of the relevant and opposite weaknesses of the British, and of the degree to which Britain and America contributed to the German *malaise*—all well known to us for the vast literature of the period between the wars. He also records the great German contributions to European and world culture, and the claimant need for—and real possibility of—a new synthesis.

The problem of Germany is not just the contemporary German problem; it is also the whole problem of modern Western Man; therein lies its real difficulty but also the greater hope of its final solution:

> The Englishman, typified by Saint Thomas à Becket and by King Henry VIII, as an Ironside under Cromwell and as a fellow-reveller of the Merry Monarch, as a subject of George II and such as he is now under George V—what bewildering changes, many of them quite unforeseeable! Nor is the modification of the German, here hoped for, essentially greater than has been the change of the Frenchman, from the dreamer of a domination of Europe under Louis XIV or Napoleon I to the sober-minded Frenchman of our time; or, again, than the change from the German of an outlook largely determined by Goethe, or by Kant, to the German temper which we now deplore.

And when it comes to re-construction, there is no futile talk in von Hügel of schemes for which the world is not ready, any abstract talk about the absolute right of self-determination by any "nation," any unworkable "league" of all sovereign nations, any fictions of a "Big Five" of which two at least are not now "big," any simple-minded phrases about "united" nations or "good-neighbor" policies.

He accepts as a definition of war the characteristically British understatement by Mr. Belloc:

> When two independent communities conflict in will, if neither give way, there must be recourse to force. That is, each community must attempt to render life so unpleasing to the members of the other community that, rather than continue under such conditions, that other community will accept the enemy's will.

And he gives what amounts to his definition of peace as follows:

> Man has his earthly life, with its predominantly physical requirements and individual self-seeking; he finds himself, from the first, environed and moulded by the complexes, largely one within the other, of his family, his trade, his state; he even discovers, and is largely determined by, the fact that his own state depends extensively upon the existence, the rivalry, the trust and friendship of other states.

The establishment and preservation of peace, and the avoidance of war, turn on the recognition of man as man, of man as not just animal, of man as not just sinner, of man indeed as not just redeemed. Neither biological science on the one hand, nor theology on the other, have the characteristic word to say to our problem, the German problem and the human problem. We must recognize the facts of ethics:

> In reality, the very skin and flesh and bones of my hand or foot are not simply animal; they have been penetrated and modified, through and through, by the neural, psychophysical and (more centrally) imaginative, mental, volitional, emotional life of a being precisely human. The human State, it is true, appears to have for its most immediate end the physical protection and well-being of its subjects, and to require the outfit of constraining physical force. The State may thus require, for all time, more of force even than of justice, and far more of justice than of mercy. But the human State is, in reality, penetrated by humanity; it is based, if not upon brotherly love, yet neither upon force, but upon consent—the seeking and finding of some inchoate justice and interdependence, with force as its aid and sanction. The State can and does rise, sink—otherwise than a stone; it can be and is mixed, inconsistent—otherwise than are the oxygen and the nitrogen in the air; it can and does have an end, a responsibility, a repentence, whilst alive in its connection with human beings. It is understandable, judgeable, improveable, indeed tolerable, only when thus apprehended and operative in its true nature, not as a ruthless machine, a tornado, a fate, a

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> physical law, a pack of wolves, a monkey horde, but as essentially human, springing from man, operating through man, leading to man—man who is man only, everywhere, only as a creature of flesh *and* of spirit, of force *and* of justice, and even of love.

And these facts of ethics are ancient as well as modern, pagan as well as Christian:

> It is because of this profound difference between the State and a cloud, and between War and a thunderstorm, that Rome could, already under Cicero, define the State, not in terms of force or utility alone, but of justice as well; and that under the Antonines and Trajan, the State could approach—precisely as State, as Constitution, as Law—the practice of much justice within the force, and not a little mercy within the justice. Similarly England has been able to abandon, after a hundred years war, all claims to France; this same England could deliberately regret her attempted coercion of her American colonies, and make the greatest sacrifices in atonement for past injustice to Ireland. . . . Ethical inconsistency is indeed more or less everywhere: even legitimate self-interest is difficult to define, and still more difficult not to overstep; yet the cynical rejection of all altruism anywhere is no better, objectively, than a senile childishness.

This resolute and unsentimental humanism of von Hügel's appears to me a program and outlook on which theist and non-theist, Christian and Jew, white and colored, labor and capital, British and American, and even the German and Japanese "remnants" could be got to live in something more like peace than war. I think, though I am not sure, that it is relatively independent of von Hügel's "over-beliefs," as William James would call them, his beliefs as a Christian and Catholic, his belief in a Church as well as a State. But he warns us "how powerful in our times are the solicitations that tend to deflect the genuine development towards Historical Religion" and the tendency to "rest in the ultimate reality of certain laws of the ethical life. This danger, assuredly real in England, is trebly real in Germany." And even then he could just as well have added a reference to America.

I shall therefore end with one of the most eloquent and moving passages in this or any of his work, where he pleads for the interlocking of the religious and the moral, of the Christian and Catholic, with the peaceful life of men and nations:

> Man is indeed a sinner and requires redemption; but, more largely and fundamentally still, he is a creature with certain natural powers, needs and ends. These include a certain kind of morality and religion, and operate for and within space and succession, sense and the body. Man is also a creature touched by, thirsting for, and elevated to, certain supernatural realities and requirements, which concern his duration and his spirit, and which find their completion for him, not in this earthly life, but in the other. Man's centrally natural life, with its morality of the Golden Rule, forms and finds its specific complex in the State. Man's centrally supernatural life, with its ethics of the Sermon on the Mount, has its specific expression and means in the Church.
>
> The State is here recognised as essentially ethical, although ethical in an elementary, homely, give-and-take, calculating and self-conscious way. And the Church has not to infuse *this* morality into the State, but has only to aid in awakening it there, as a morality always latent in the State as such.
>
> The Church has, roughly, to begin where the State leaves off; and *her* ethics are of a transcending, abiding, self-oblivious, God-seeking and God-finding order, the whole a gift from the God of Grace, intended to meet, penetrate, raise and satisfy the aspiration infused by Himself into the work of the God of Nature.
>
> And these Gods are not two Gods, any more than these men are two creatures. But the same God, once for all the God of Nature and of Grace, supports, stimulates and satisfies man, once for all a creature of sense and time, of spirit and eternity, and does so, for each of these lives and levels, in and through the other. Hence State and Church are both necessary to man's full development in his two levels and calls. They are even variously necessary each to the other.

A Soldier's Creed

Pilot-Officer W. T. VAN STOCKUM

I DIDN'T join the war to improve the Universe; in fact, I am sick and tired of the eternal sermons on the better world we are going to build when this war is over. I hate the disloyalty to the past twenty years. Apparently people think that life in those twenty years, which cover most of my conscious existence, was so terrible that no one can be expected to fight for it. We must attempt to dazzle people with some brilliant schemes leading, probably, to some horrible Utopia, before we can ask them to fight.

I detest that point of view. I hate the idea of people throwing their lives away for slum-clearance projects or forty-hour weeks or security and exchange commissions. It is a grotesque and horrible thought. There are so many better ways of achieving this than diving into enemy guns. Lives are precious things and are of a different order and entail a different scale of values than social systems, political theories, or art.

"Why are we not given a cause?" some people ask. I do not understand this question. It seems so plain to me. There are millions and millions of people who are shot, persecuted and tortured daily in Europe. The assault on so many of our fellow human beings makes some of us tingle with anger and gives us an urge to do something about it. That, and that alone, makes some of us feel strongly about the war. All the rest is vapid rationalization. All this talk about philosophy, the degeneration of art and literature, the poisoning of nazi youth, which the nazi system entails, and which we all rightly condemn, is still not the reason why we fight and why we are willing to risk our lives.

Here, let us say, is a soldier. He asks himself, "Why should I die?" You would tell him: "To

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preserve our civilization." When the soldier replies: "To Hell with your civilization; I never thought it so hot," you take him up wrongly when you sit down and say to yourself: "Well, after all, maybe it wasn't so hot," and then brightly tap him on the shoulder and say: "Well, I've thought of a better idea. I know this civilization wasn't so hot, but you go and die anyway and we'll fix up a really good one after the war." I say you take him up wrong because his remarks: "To Hell with your civilization" doesn't really mean that he is not seriously concerned about our civilization. He is simply revolted by the idea of dying for *any* civilization. Civilization simply isn't the kind of thing you ever want to die for. It is something to enjoy and something to help build up because it's fun, and that is that, and that is all.

When a man jumps into the fire to save his wife he doesn't justify himself by saying that his wife was so civilized that it was worth the risk! There is only one reason why a man will throw himself into mortal combat and that is because there is nothing else to do and doing nothing is more intolerable than the fear of death. I could stand idly by and see every painting by Rembrandt, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo thrown into a bonfire and feel no more than a deep regret, but throw one small, insignificant Polish urchin on the same bonfire and, by God, I'd pull him out or else. I fight quite simply for that and I cannot see what other reasons there are. At least, I can see there are reasons, but they are not the reasons that motivate me.

During the first two years of the war when I was an instructor at an American University in close contact with American youth and in close contact with the vital isolationist question in the States, I often felt that there was much insincerity, conscious or unconscious, on our, the interventionist, side of the argument. We had strong views on the danger of isolationism for the United States. We thought rightly, that for the sake of self-interest and self-preservation the the United States should take every step to ensure the defeat of the nazi criminals. But however sound our arguments, our own motives and intensity of feeling did not spring from those arguments but from an intense passion for common righteousness and decency.

Suppose it could have been proved to us at that time that the participation of the United States in the stamping out of organized murder, rape and torture in Europe could only take place at great cost to the United States, while not doing so would in no way impair her security. Would we not still have prayed that our country might do something? And would we not have been proud to see her do something?

There is an appalling timidity and false shame among intellectuals. The common man in the last war went to fight quite simply as a crusader. I am not talking about politics now, I am not either asserting or denying that England declared war from purely generous and noble considerations, but I am asserting that the common man went and fought with the rape of Belgium foremost in his mind and saw himself as an avenger of wrong.

After the war the common man went quietly back to his home. The intellectuals, however, upon coming back, ashamed of their one lapse of finding themselves in agreement with every Tom, Dick and Harry, must turn around and deride the things they were ready to give their lives for. As they were the only vocal group, the opinion became firmly established that the last war was a grave mistake and that anyone who got killed in it was a sucker.

And now, in this war, these intellectuals are hoist with their own petard. They lack the nerve and honesty to represent the American doughboy to himself for what he is. They do not give him the one picture in his mind which would stimulate his imagination and which would make him see beyond the fatigues, the mud, the boredom and the fear. The picture is there for anyone to paint who has a gift for words. It is a simple picture and a true picture and no one who has ever sat as a small child and listened with awe to a fairy story can fail to understand. The intellectuals, however, have made fun of the picture and so they won't use it.

But some day an American doughboy in an American tank will come lurching into some small Polish, Czech or French village and it may fall to his lot to shoot the torturers and open the gates of the village jail. And then he will understand.

There is a lot of talk among our intellectuals about our youth. Our youth is supposed to want a change, a new order, a revolution or what not. But it is my conviction that that is emphatically *not* what our youth wants. Have you ever been in a picture house on a Saturday afternoon, when it is filled with children and some old Western movie is ending in a race of time between the hero and the villain? Have you seen the rapt attention, the glowing faces, the clenched fists? What our young men really want is to be able to give that same concentrated attention and emotional participation, this time to reality, and this time as heroes and not as spectators, that they were able to give to unsubstantial shadows, before long words and clichés had killed their imaginations. Killed them so dead that they can no longer see even reality itself imaginatively.

It is up to the intellectuals to rekindle the thing they have tried to destroy. It is as simple as Saint George and the Dragon. Why not have

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the courage to point out that Saint George fought the dragon because he wanted to liberate a captive and not because he wanted to lead a better life afterwards? Some day, sometime, my picture of an American doughboy in a Polish village will become true. Wouldn't it be better for him then to have the cross of Saint George on his banner than a long rigmarole about a better world?

As long as our intellectuals and leaders do not have the courage to risk being thought sentimental and out-of-date and are not willing to stress that nations as well as individuals are entitled to their acts of heroism and chivalry, they will never be able to give our youth what it needs.

It is true that every fairy story ends with the words, "and they lived happily ever after." How irritating a child would be, though, if it interrupted its mother at every sentence to ask: "But, Mummy, will they live happily ever afterwards?" It simply isn't the point of the fairy story and it isn't the point of this war.

Presumably we won't live happily ever after this war. But just as a fairy story helps to increase a child's awareness and wonder at the world, so this war may make us more aware of one another. Perhaps we shall learn, and perhaps some things will be better organized. I hope so. I believe so. But only if we engage in this war with our hearts as well as our minds.

For goodness' sake let us stop this empty political theorizing according to which a man would have to have a university degree in social science before he could see what he was fighting for.

It is all so simple, really, that a child can understand it.

Communications

BENVENISTI AND NEO-MALTHUSIANISM

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: In your issue of August 11, 1944, you published a letter from me taking exception to a remark in an article by Mr. J. L. Benvenisti which you had published in the issue of June 16. Your comment on my challenge to this remark left the situation rather worse than the remark itself.

Mr. Benvenisti writes clearly enough to require no exegesis from any of us. He is well acquainted with population literature, and has published sound discussion in this field. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to expect him, or anyone purporting to deal with population trends, to be informed that the crux of the "population problem," as understood and represented by neo-Malthusian writers, is the measurement of the optimum population for whatever area happens to be under discussion. The advocates of birth prevention all make the same tribute to Western hygiene for having cut down infant, adolescent and early adult mortality that you underscore as proof of Mr. Benvenisti's freedom from that heresy; and they all emphasize, as he does, the excess of population in India over the optimal limit. I do not refer to the virulent tracts of pseudo-sociologists and apprehensive fretters over the precariousness of Anglo-Saxon ascendancy, but to serious books such as G. E. Hubbard's "Eastern Industrialization and Its Effects on the West" (Oxford, 1935) in which, at page 92, we find this: "The population problem is undoubtedly the crux of the problem of poverty, and although not so persistently brought to the fore in relation to India as in relation to Japan, is perhaps no less vital for the former than for the latter." By whomsoever made, this categorical assertion is open to categorical challenge. Asiatic and European scholars of standing as high as that of any defender of the proposition to which I object, namely that it is "a simple fact that the vast problem of Indian poverty is simply the problem of a huge population pressing on the means of subsistence," make it abundantly clear that it is not at all a simple fact that "India's vast population exceeds her present productive capacity," because of which, you say, 'poverty is rife." I may refer you not only to eminent Indian economists such as D. G. Karve, "Poverty and Population in India" (Oxford, 1936) and R. Mukerjee, "Migrant Asia" (Rome, 1936) but to the latest and most comprehensive volume on India to appear under British auspices, the remarkable volume edited by L. S. S. O'Malley, "Modern India and the West" (Oxford, 1941), in which the learned editor is at pains to temper the sweeping statements of even some of his own contributors, such as Mrs. Vera Anstey, by repeatedly emphasizing the complexity of the problem. At page 724 he states that the growth of population since the establishment of Pax Britannica in India has not been relieved by improvements in agriculture; that growth, moreover, has cut down the unit size of landholding below the subsistence level, which is something that Hindu law governing the succession to, and division of, property could have helped to offset. I have already taken far too much space to presume to cite here the French, German, Italian and Russian authorities—at least as trustworthy guides in the field of population theory as anyone the English-speaking world has produced in the last century—who take the position that Asiatic poverty is not the consequence of over-population. But they exist, and their realism and learning is at least no more colored by national interest than those of the English-speaking world.

Inasmuch as many months have passed since the publication of Mr. Benvenisti's article, it may be useful to close my case by way of a brief summary. Mr. Benvenisti was reviewing a number of matters in relatively small space. He felt it to be in point to observe that social problems arising from widespread distress and poverty will confront India after she ceases to belong to the British Commonwealth of Nations. This is obviously true, and quite germane to the position taken in the article. The logic and force of the statement did not at all require gratuitous side-flourishes concerning India's "sheer super-abundance of mouths." No strength what-

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ever was contributed to the author's position by the categorical assertion that "the vast problem of Indian poverty is simply the problem of a huge population pressing on the means of subsistence."

This statement means that if there is any solution for the problem of Indian poverty it will be found in the establishment of a right relationship between the number of inhabitants and the means of subsistence. This relationship will exist only when the highest average individual return from the fullest exploitation of these means of subsistence has been attained. When the population of India, having been persuaded that the "optimum" number of inhabitants has been ascertained, will refrain from replacing those who die for a period sufficient to bring down the total number to the desired "optimum," the "vast problem of Indian poverty" will be solved. This is substantially the position taken by those economists, statisticians and journalists, notably in the English-speaking world, who seek a logical theoretical basis for a public policy with respect to population, designed to regulate directly the rates of replacement—above all among peoples whose rapid increase might give rise to international conflict later. I pointed out in my lectures, under the auspices of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in the national universities of South America in 1940-41, that no nation could have less reason than the United States to adhere to the concept of a stationary population, yet it was precisely in the United States that we could find the unique example of exalted official condonation and reassurance in this regard. It is not inconceivable that we shall soon behold our Government committed to a lavish underwriting of worldwide campaigns for planned parenthood, "clinics" and the rest; it would not be out of keeping with the thinking of a chief executive who could entrust the guidance of military morale to a declared advocate of human sterilization. With the wide prevalence of the notion that the overcrowding of parts of this planet must somehow be stopped, and the scoffing at natural rights by absolutist States of varying shades of political and social doctrine, we are not at all unlikely to witness, in the near future, a determined effort to *enforce* Asiatic conformity with our view of what should be the rates of replacement of the Indians, Japanese and Chinese. Hence, it is by no means an academic matter to challenge statements which support the proposition that poverty is the consequence of excessive numbers, even when those statements are made by persons who do not formally adhere to the artificial restriction of births.

CONSTANTINE E. MCGUIRE.

IN REPLY

London, England.

TO the Editors: Wartime conditions made it impossible for me to take part in the slight controversy which my "Commentary" dealing with the British in India appears to have aroused, and it is a little belated for me to say much now. Since, however, your correspondent Dr. McGuire appears to interpret a statement of mine as a veiled advocary of artificial birth prevention, I hope you will give me the opportunity of saying (1) that no such advocacy was intended (2) that I am still unable to understand how such an interpretation could be placed on what I wrote.

The statement to which Dr. McGuire took exception was to the effect that 'the vast problem of Indian poverty is simply the problem of a huge population pressing on the means of subsistence." If the making of such a statement is a veiled advocary of birth control, then it is a veiled advocary of murder to state that a bus is overcrowded. The theory that one may not mention a problem or state it in factual terms because somebody might possibly propound an indefensible solution is surely novel in morals.

You have been good enough to forward to me a further letter from Dr. McGuire [printed above—*Editors*] which you have not yet published in which he says that I "emphasize the excess of population in India over the optimal limit." Dr. McGuire must pardon me; I never breathed a word about any "optimal limit." There was no suggestion of such a conception in the whole of the article. Indeed my views appear to coincide wholly with Dr. McGuire's and what is really amusing in his letter is that in his anxiety to disprove an argument I never advanced, he goes to the trouble of advancing an argument I did use, but which he does not appear to have listened to when I used it. He says that the growth of Indian population has not been relieved by improvements in agriculture and refers to the fragmentation of holdings arising out of the nature of Hindu law. But all this was clearly pointed out in my own article and I cannot but suppose that Dr. McGuire did not have time to read it properly.

J. L. BENVENISTI.

GERMAN ATROCITIES

San Francisco, Calif.

TO the Editors: Tamerlane made a mountain of skulls and turned the earthly paradise of Asia Minor into a desert. Hitler and Himmler incinerated millions of human beings and used their ashes to fertilize the fields.

Various fools are shouting the punishment they would inflict for all these crimes, but, as we have listened, we have wondered whether these fools who talk so much about retributive justice could be trusted not to commit even more heinous crimes. They are indeed fools who are of the conceit that any man or men can measure the punishments required to pay atonement for what has been done in this war.

How much death and destruction must there be before we begin to search for the causes of such fiendish cruelty? How many wars must be fought before the men and women of the West learn that some kinds of thinking always lead to certain depravity?

Is this bestiality, this fiendish intricacy of malevolence something that a quack anthropologist may attribute only to the national enemy? Do not be deceived by fools. It could happen here. The sadists are with all peoples in every clime and place, on every economic and social

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level of human intercourse. We have had them at Santa Rosa, Centralia, in Alabama, Texas, Georgia and all the lynching South, we have had them in the steel towns of Pennsylvania, in the coal villages of West Virginia, in Colorado and in the desert states. We have had them in headlines as well as in suppressed news stories and in the reports of Steinbeck. We have had them for and against labor, as well as in the Christian Fronters of the Bronx and Brooklyn and among the followers of Gerald K. Smith. The beast directed by perverted intelligence is always there ready to play with knives and clubs and acid and fire, whenever the arm of justice suffers the stroke of hate. Sadism is written in the history of the settling of the West.

The sadists are always around, as Ralph Adams Cram declared; the Neanderthal man persists at the bottom of society ready to rise against constructive intelligence, ready to destroy in orgies of violence whatever shall have been built up so patiently. The sadists are not the key to the problem.

What we want to find out is what gets into men, who have civil authority, that allows them to permit and encourage the unleashing of the sadists. How do they think? What do they think is the meaning of man and of the life of man? Why do they hate?

Hitler started out to help the German people. Why did he, where thwarted, lose control of his judgment? Why did Stalin permit the starving of the Kulaks? Why did the Governors of our Federal Reserve under Coolidge permit the stock and credit markets to go out of control?

Why do men, holding stewardships of trust, lose control of their own passions?

Aristotle, Sophocles, Virgil, the Hebrew prophets, Shakespeare, Milton, Dante dug into hellish depths for causes of cruelty and called them by their right names. They knew and each according to his genius named the nemesis of his own day, and someone spoke truly of the seven deadly sins in those who held high places.

Change the name, if it is too unfashionable, or more likely if the naming is unpleasantly self-reproachful, but get at the causes in our teaching, thinking, habitual living. Call in the anthropologists, the psychologists, the psychiatrists, the endocrinologolists, the philosphers, the preachers as the King of Babylon called in his soothsayers to read the handwriting on the wall. The German atrocities are written on the wall of our civilization.

Until 1914 we were taught much as Germany was taught; we have had extravagant beneficiaries of the economic order as silly as were the nobles of Russia who played charades until the hard will of Lenin struck them down; we have been making money, enjoying our pleasures, and fighting two monstrous wars in avoidance of the causes of man's cruelty to man.

We talk and write of all the *isms*: communism, fascism, nazism, capitalism and the rest of the catchwords. These are effects of causes that must be probed in the dark places of individual human hearts, and brought out into the light and acknowledged for the evil that they do.

GORDON O'NEILL.

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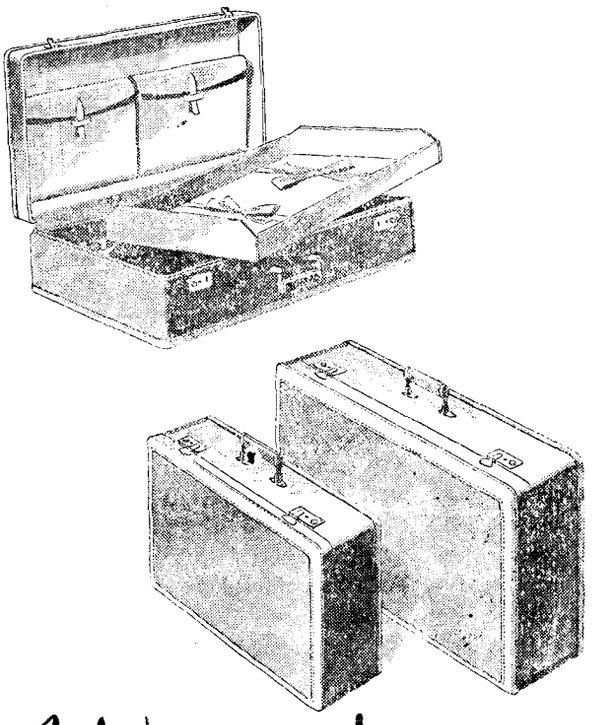

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The Stage

Sophie

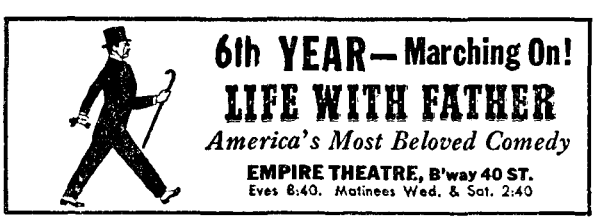
OFF, after a week at the Playhouse, there is small reason for remarking this late comedy adapted by George Ross and Rose C. Feld from Miss Feld's erstwhile *New Yorker* stories. I will abstract the playing of Ann Shepherd and Katina Paxinou, and Michael Gordon's staging from the general quag. Miss Shepherd in the first ingenue rôle, was, I thought, delightful —a discovery. What is more significant is that here is a case in point showing that the determined commonplaceness of magazine journalism (a symptom of *New Yorker* fiction) cannot be quickened on the stage. I, for instance, never heard anyone commend the series of stories from which this comedy was drawn; never heard anyone mention it; was never able to read it myself with rage and/or delight. Nevertheless, here, in an even more adjusted mediocrity, it is offered on the stage: well acted, fairly set, ingeniously directed, and closed within a week in a most eager season. Surrounded by other media, plus the brilliant departmental work for which its magazine is noted, it came off in print simply as a space-waster. Presented alone on the boards it came off pure—i.e., stupid. There will, of course, be more (years) of this molehill-from-a-molehill stuff on the Street and one can only wish it will be as shortly supported. But it is bad that good theater workers should have to be spent dispersing it.

Trio

THE NOISY nastiness of the Shubert's refusal of a theater to this plain piece by Dorothy and Howard Baker leaves a reviewer in a sort of Voltairean tangle —defense to the death at the same time as disagreement to the hilt—the same sort of tangle as that faced by Rebecca West in her masterly vindication of the novel, "The Well Of Loneliness." I thought the book from which this play was drawn was a meretricious one. I think the play, theatrically speaking, rewarding, and there is assuredly no question of taste or decorum being violated these evenings at the Belasco. But the problem, or rather the attack on the problem, outlined in both these efforts seems to me lopsided—trite and not astute. We have had the same school-triangle schemed before. Its construction depends upon an older woman willfully exercising an abnormal emotional influence over a young girl, whose influence conflicts, in this instance, with the healthy instincts of an average, perhaps over-emotional, young man. Leaving aside, for the moment, the easy drama of such a conflict, together with the unnecessary implications attached to its present vehicle by the owners of the Street, together with the protestations of all directly concerned with the production, it seems to me that this structure is not only faulty but proceeds from a most sadly sentimental concept in the minds of the authors. I think what Mrs. Baker in her novel (certinly in her play), what someone like Clemence Dane in an early book, what movies like "Madchen In Uniform," what all these similar projects were really trying to adumbrate is a portrait of a woman possessed of a lust for power over the lives of other human beings. But I cannot honestly judge this evil to be historically, medically, or psychologically rather more homosexual than heterosexual. And in any case, fictionalized as incessantly and identically as it has been, I cannot react to its present personification as again important.

In short, my complaint about "Trio" is that it is not serious, although in the novel, entangled (a cross-mess fortunately deleted from the play) with a further superficial examination of the either/or in-spite-of/because-of morality of the creative artist, I may say the work came perilously near to being serious indeed: seriously stupid. What is serious of course is the old old dreary dismal over-and-over sex-stress, upheld as certainly by moralists of all denominations as by the scientists. (See Rougemont, "The Devil's Share," chap. 53). While it is a truism to record again in print that all aberrations imply an order, I think it is no truism that the modern, miasmal, spiral emphasis on passion has unquestionably reared the conviction that all and any sexual aberration *constitutes* an order, and so it is regarded by its extremest sufferers as well as by its adherents. I think it is from this point (crux) that the work Mrs. Baker honestly wished to formulate must spring in order to be regarded in any way as an expression of life. And it stands to reason that such a work cannot be peopled by those stock figurines, the Witch and the Maiden and Little Boy Blue (that prince), conventions out of Romance and the Golden Age. The problem is not romantic. The problem is tragic. The work must be real. It will seem quixotic to accuse the movers as well as the shakers of this show of one common inexactitude, but I think all of them—the authors, Lee Sabinson (the producer), most of all, the tiresome Shubert office are guilty of romanticism, and that they were here severally engaged in frivolous business.

To return to the boards, where I belong, I would like to underline that the play is finely, delicately acted by Lydia St. Clair as the teacher, Lois Wheeler as the girl. Richard Widmark as the boy is not so happy, I think. While his long second-act scene with Miss Wheeler should have interested—if for no other reason than that it has become thrilling to contemplate two characters alone on any stage with something to communicate to each other—it is unfortunate that so much of his part dealt with no communication at all, was little more than hyperbolic soliloquy—in arpeggio. And I am afraid Mr. Widmark rather leans in this direction in his own style. I feel he was cast no more for the Saroyanesque dimensions of the rôle than for his own known boy-alive-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alone-in-love-look look facility. Bretaigne Windust's direction seemed careful if perhaps a little overweighted (*Freud with interest*) now and again. The minor characters were too silly to discuss. (*At the Belasco.*)

The Hasty Heart

I INTEND to discuss John Patrick's piece at length next week but would like to get it down here that this soldier's straight play about convalescent soldiers stationed on the Assam-Burma front is one of the most notable and satisfying of the season. *And* a performance. Fortunately, it does not take great space to record when a hit is worth it. (*At the Hudson.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Editors' Choice

BALKAN BACKGROUND. *Bernard Newman. Macmillan.* $2.50. CHINESE WIT, WISDOM AND WRITTEN CHARACTERS. *Rose Quong. Pantheon. Regular Edition* $2.75. *Bound in Chinese Silk and with Slip-case* $3.75.

More Sinned Against

THESE days the American people are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain their hopes even for western Europe. They are puzzled over Belgium, Italy and the current anti-American recriminations of the British press. The temptation to wash our hands of these stormy foreigners has hardly ever been stronger in most recent times. War weariness in the depth of winter is accomplishing some deadly work. If wiser counsels prevail we shall eventually surmount these obstacles and join Britain, France and the others in working out something durable in the way of peace. But to most Americans the Balkan countries are and will long be tangled in an inextricable mess. Rumors of the most appalling atrocities on the part of opposing Balkan factions have recently strengthened even further American pessimism about these harassed and impoverished lands.

Bernard Newman, a well-traveled and literate Englishman, has written for his compatriots, and now for us, an account of the various peoples from the Slovenes to the Turks which adduces considerable testimony in their favor. He has gone about by bicycle and taken plenty of time; he has come to know and love them well. Of course in any country the man in the fields or in the city street can seldom be charged with anything more than being over-susceptible or over-submissive to those who pull the strings. But most of the Balkan inhabitants are peculiarly virtuous and lovable. (The tragic thing is that in time easy-going, temperate people can be conditioned to perform the most barbarous cruelties, again by those who have seized the reins of power.) The Balkan countries have had their share of ruthless politicians, too, but few of them could have got nearly so far without support and encouragement from the larger Powers, who found the Balkans a most active field for their rival political ambitions. The Great Powers and the old corrupt Turkish Empire are the real villains in the piece.

Greece, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and the rest pose, therefore, one of the key problems in the coming peace. How can they retain territorial integrity and an adequate degree of national sovereignty together with the security which is one unquestioned essential if these hard-pressed

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peoples are to make a go of things? The most obvious answer, and one to which Mr. Newman himself is quite partial, is that of federation. Unhappily that is an idea which enrages the overfearful and oversensitive Soviet leaders. Meanwhile the Russian armies are rolling through the Balkans with such speed that they will be in possession when cease firing sounds. How drastically the whole picture has changed since Mr. Newman first completed his manuscript, a danger for every author who gets out a book of political prognostications in the midst of a blitz-type war. Clearly one basic political problem of the United Nations is to find a formula that will preserve the identity of small nations without thereby endangering the world's peace. Mr. Newman, then, is to be commended primarily for posing the problem in its most acute form here.

Once he leaves the fields of travel, political boundaries and the like, the author falls into some strange vagaries. Obviously, for instance, he has never read Faulkner's "Plowman's Folly," for he reverts again and again to the fact that Balkan agriculture uses primitive methods and fails to plow deep enough; he seems to call for the type of American agricultural machinery which has produced our dustbowls and dispossessed. And when he tries to explain the tragic separation of the Greek Orthodox Church from the Catholic Church, he simply adverts to "a subtle theological dispute" and "the refusal of the Greek Church to use images." Mr. Newman also seems to think that the Balkans can sustain a good standard of living for themselves by exchanging agricultural commodities for manufactured products—possibly a case of British wishful thinking. He has included one of the best tall stories to be encountered in recent books: "There is only one bridge across the Danube below Belgrade: it is at Cernavoda, between Bucarest and Constantsa, and is of great strategic as well as economic importance. Elsewhere, ferries are the rule. There are boats on the Danube, but on some of its tributaries more primitive methods prevail. Once, on a river bank, I shouted for a ferry. Nobody appeared, but presently a huge water-buffalo swam across the river and stood beside me. Later, a youth explained to me that this was the ferry, and showed me how to use it. He undressed and tied his bundle of clothes to the buffalo's horns; the buffalo swam with the flat of his head above water, keeping the clothes dry, while the youth hung onto its tail."

"Balkan Background" is primarily a study motivated by the love of oppressed peoples and strongly advocating "equal opportunity for nations," particularly for the long-exploited Balkan nations. Mr. Newman's primary contribution here is that he has posed the Balkan problem with such human sympathy. Economics does not seem to be his forte, nor does agronomy. But he is good at posing political problems. His specialty has been to get around and see the people who live in territories which are the source of sharp dispute between two or more nations. That was what made his recent book about the boundary problems of the peace so good. And that is why his current volume includes so much pertinent information which cannot be found in other and more theoretical books.

Funny Marks

OF all the books published in 1944 this is perhaps the most charming and the most difficult to read through. But since it would be utterly foolish for anyone to try to read it through, this is no disadvantage. Rose Quong has conceived a brilliant idea and has carried it out equally brilliantly. We have all known since we went to school that Chinese is written in an elaborate system of pictographs. We know that those strange characters which adorn the shops in Chinatown or the tickees which we must never lose if we want to get our laundry back somehow represent something other than sounds. They bear, we know, a relationship to things—men, hearts, streets, fields. But they have become so conventionalized, so subtly changed by thousands of years of usage, that we see in them nothing but eccentric brush strokes, largely lacking any artistic interest to our eye because they are meaningless to that eye.

Miss Quong has tried to remedy all this. She has not tried to teach us Chinese. But she takes the characters and tells us what they depict, and we begin to see emerging from them those things which have been hidden to us. Since the Chinese are intelligent and witty, they have used wit and intelligence in building up their written language. This also Miss Quong demonstrates to us.

Her technique is simple. She starts at the beginning. "In the beginning man, standing upright on his two legs, realizes himself a human being." So he depicts his status with two brush strokes, so joined as to suggest a figure standing on two legs. Then he stretches his arms and feels "big." So a third brush stroke indicates the same human being, standing on his two legs with arms outstretched, and we have the character for big. "But overtopping man, be he ever so big, there lies—Heaven; the sky." So a little fourth brush stroke indicates something "overtopping" the human being, standing on his two legs with arms outstretched.

That summarizes the first page of Miss Quong's book. From such simple things, she goes on to astronomy and agriculture and the weaker sex and the assions and the emotions. We find out about mountains and flowing water and the months of the year and forests and household utensils and life on the farm. Gradually elaborated are family institutions, rules of right conduct, the points of the compass. And finally, at the end, we find ourselves well into philosophy and ethics and metaphysics.

We discover that the characters for "America" consist of pictures meaning "Beautiful Country"; those for England, "Brave Country." And to our delight, we find that the qualities of peace, justice and equality may all be written with the same character—the same identical pictograph. "Confucius said: 'All under Heaven, one family.'"

It is difficult to imagine a book which would be harder to review than "Chinese Wit, Wisdom and Written Characters." It is also difficult to imagine a book which any curious-minded person could get more fun out of. Those without natural curiosity will wonder why it is worth bothering. But happily there are many in this world otherwise-minded. And for sheer fun-to-look-at, Miss Quong's volume can't be beat.

More Books of the Week

Cannery Row. John Steinbeck. Viking. $2.00.

WELL, it is about the people who live in "Cannery Row" where they can sardines out in California, but it is not about the people who come to work in the factories, it is about the people who are there at night

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when there is no work going on, and about those who are there in the daytime but not doing the work. Most of the people in the book do not do any work; Mr. Steinbeck calls them "bums" or "angels"—an equivalence —but of course it is not possible that there should be no working at all, it is not possible to live without working sometimes, and it depends also on what you call work; the Chinese Lee Chong works because he runs the grocery store, and "Doc," when the tide is low, works at collecting sea animals for sale from his laboratory, and the girls at Dora's work—they even call it a profession. "Cannery Row" has a plot: the bums think that "Doc" is the kindest man they have ever heard of and they try to give him a party, but they get it started too soon and it wrecks the laboratory and all the beautiful disks which play Gregorian and the "Pavane" and "Daphnis," and "Doc," when he get home and finds the mess, smashes the kindest of the bums in the mouth and then everybody is very sad about human misery. After this there is a great deal about the life, murders and voracities of the little animals that hide in the rocks and are discoverable when the tide is low; there are several short stories complete in themselves; again the tide recedes and this time there is the body of a young girl caught in the rocks, and "Doc" is very sad again about human misery; there is the story about Henri the painter and the girls who never can live with him for long because it is too uncomfortable in the boat he has built to live in on shore because he does not like a boat on water; there is a story about the man who roller-skates to a record on a platform on top of a pole; there is a suicide, and the story of how the bums manage to live in a sort of community house of their own, and how they get enough to drink, and how a man takes pride in his house whenever he can feel that his house is his own; there is the story of how the brothel functions and this includes the sad story of how sometimes a man can be very unhappy if he is the bouncer in a brothel, but even this is not a hopeless story because after this bouncer has killed himself there is another bouncer who is very happy and makes many friends. This sounds as if the plot had been lost sight of, and it would sound even more so if some more of the stories were here recapitulated, but the plot is all right and so Mack and the bums plan another party for the kindest man in the world and, this time, they are very much more careful about it, and it works out fine. The laboratory is wrecked again but this time "Doc" thinks it is fine because he has been right in on the party all the time. Dora and her girls are at the party, everybody in the book is at the party, unless he killed himself before the party; "Doc" reads out loud a long and beautiful poem from the Sanskrit—no less— and everybody weeps, but all this is so wonderful that there must be a "release" somehow for this wonderful purity of the moment and fortunately the crew of a San Pedro tuna boat who are looking for Dora's girls try to break in and so there is a lot of wonderful fighting in which everyone fights to save everyone else's feelings or honor, and in the morning everyone is strewn round everywhere.

Then comes the sad story about a gopher who builds a wonderful home and cannot find a mate so that he has to move to a less wonderful home.

It all smells of fish and reeks with kindness.

Is there any use in reading this book? It is as sentimental as a book can be. It oozes sentiment. And of course the confusion comes in because it is written in

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the technique of realism. The tripes are described. (Literally. A small boy and a dog find them in a gulch. They are supposed to be those of the late Josh Billings.) So that one might make a mistake; one might take this book for a scientific true and complete picture of life. But that would be a false impression produced by the sound of the words, the hard, harsh words, and the sound of the cursing, also by the sound of broken bottles. But all this method, all the technique is not used for description or employed in a realistic search for the truth; it is used to make us weep. Read it and weep. The technique of realism is used by an impressionist.

As for Mr. Steinbeck's philosophical interests they are not usable for anything. There is something about "Our Father who art in nature" in a passage in which "The Thing becomes the Word," but this is not usable even for blasphemy because it seems so obviously well-intentioned and so certainly is stupid.

So that the realism is false, the thinking unimportant, and all that is left is the weeping all over everything. Tears through joy or the other way round. Well, what is it worth? It is not worth much for anyone who has seen man's pity for man expressed by any of the great and honest writers of world literature. Or for anyone who through God's grace knows that the prostitute, the miserable and the lost remain for ever inseparably bound to him in the brotherhood of man. But for those who have tried to break that link considering the prostitute an animal, the miserable remote, and the lost for ever irrecoverable, then anything which may bring them to tears would be worth reading. Maudlin tears are better than no tears at all. The trouble is that such people would think that "Cannery Row" is funny.

C. G. PAULDING.

Church History in the Light of the Saints. Joseph A. Dunney. Macmillan. $2.75.

PERHAPS it is only right to admit that I commenced this book with some expectancy. At the back of my mind there was the thought that here at length might be a text destined to give church history true popular appeal.

I shall not speak of disappointment; I shall say only that there is a chasm fixed between what this might have been and what it is.

Real merits there are. The style is such as to carry the narrative along almost as though it were a novel. And the theme is a departure from that which most of us have known; for Father Dunney centers his picture of the long centuries in the Church's life not upon seething schisms and hidebound heresies but upon strong men and women of flesh and blood, two of them dwellers in these Americas. His is the tale of Christianity in terms of heroes whose virtues have earned them the honors of our altars.

Yet there are difficulties inherent in this treatment. Non-saints tend to be passed over. And when they include such figures as Boniface VIII and Martin V and Paul IV Caraffa the whole scheme suffers. Add to that the attempt to make one saint do for an entire hundred years. Many times he simply will not stretch over the full period. That means either throwing in odds and ends of other lives, or cutting down whole centuries in their prime.

One may question too the actual choice of saints to head the chapters. Surely Edward the Confessor is of less import than Pope Gregory VII in the period after 1000. And few of us would think of the third century, which saw Cornelius and Stephen of Rome and Cyprian of Carthage, as the age of Anthony the Hermit. Nor should we set Patrick of Erin over Augustine of Hippo or Leo the Great as first in his era.

But it is not in these matters that the real weakness of this volume lies. Rather in its too facile generalizations which find no backing amongst historians. One does not ask of a popular manual that it be itself the work of a specialist. But one does expect that its author shall have formed his views upon those of scholars. Frankly when one reads in these pages that Islam is "nothing but Judaism adapted to Arabia" or finds Petrarch bracketed along with anti-Christian humanists or hears that the Revolution came in 1789 "when France had reached the end of her tether and her people were degraded into madness" he wonders at the competence of him who writes. Father Dunney would have done a sounder book, I feel, had he fallen back on stronger studies.

HENRY G. J. BECK.

American Romantic Painting. Edgar P. Richardson. Weyhe. $10.00.

THUMBING through the 237 magnificent illustrations of "American Romantic Painting," one's first impulse is to curse the museum directors of our country for keeping all this from us. Why, one asks, have we been allowed to see so few canvases of so rich a period? One's second impulse is to thank Edgar P. Richardson for getting out what is unquestionably the finest book yet published on American painting.

Our *romantic* painting, as Mr. Richardson uses the term in the 22-page essay preceding the plates, begins about 1800 with the haunted landscapes of Washington Allston, and ends about three-quarters of a century later with the brooding figure pieces of Thomas Eakins. By *romantic,* Mr. Richardson does not mean any one attitude, but the sum of the attitudes prevalent in those times. His book, then, is not just another study in esthetic history, but a new examination of what life in America was like in the early nineteenth century.

We have never had greater artists, before or since. Besides Washington Allston, who fully deserved the legend he left behind him, there was Thomas Sully, who had a way with harps and young ladies in curls, Frederick Edwin Church, who traveled all over the world memorizing the habits of volcanoes, George Caleb Bingham, who recorded the wishless journeys of the craftsmen on the Mississippi, and many another. Above all, there was Thomas Cole, who in this reviewer's opinion is somewhat underestimated by Mr. Richardson. Cole wandered very far down the road taken by Giorgio di Chirico in our century, and if one fault can be found with this book, it is that there is no reproduction of Cole's masterpiece, "The Voyage of Life." Someday it must be rescued from its present oblivion in the corridors of St. Luke's Hospital, New York, and presented to a local museum.

WAYNE ANDREWS.

From These Roots. Mary M. Colum. Columbia. $2.50.

THE FONDNESS of the human mind for oversimplification is proverbial enough. And as our environment becomes increasingly complex, our problems more bewildering, the appeal of formulae which supply a simple key to actuality grows constantly. For a reviewer who is no more deeply steeped in modern world literature than I am myself there is something undeniably

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gratifying about reading this study of "The Ideas That Have Made Modern Literature," to quote this attractive volume's sub-title. It is rather neat, for instance, to sum up Coleridge and Wordsworth as a team; C. made the extraordinary familiar, while W. did his part by making the familiar extraordinary. It is rather satisfying to reduce the fathers of modern literature to a decade of names: Lessing, Herder, Coleridge, Wordsworth, De Staël, Sainte-Beuve, Taine, Flaubert, Baudelaire, Belinsky. And to pause for a few moments over the contribution of each one is as enjoyable as it is rewarding.

Yet even for an amateur like myself it sounds a bit too easy. I have a feeling that modern literature, such as it is, owes fully as much for its ideas (technique is another matter) to scientists, politicians, economists, philosophers and statesmen as it does to the figures mentioned—and, of course, the author does not really ignore them. I happen to like the literary tradition which Mrs. Colum likes and to share her exalted opinion of the Russians and her conviction as to the barrenness of our own age. But at the same time I suspect that there are other literary figures which do not particularly appeal to her who have made comparable contributions—in both techniques and ideas—to the development of modern literature. The important thing, then, is to read her book for its sound judgments, provocative ideas and enjoyable theses about writers and their works. The only mistake is to suppose that it exhausts the subject.

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The Inner Forum

My Father's House

A CONTRIBUTORY cause of religious leakage in the Catholic Church, and certainly a bar to more wide-spread conversions, is a lack of understanding and participation in the liturgy. The Mass is a glorious act of corporative worship, in which Christ our Redeemer, through the ministry of the human priest, unites all the faithful to Himself in offering Himself to the Father. We speak of the majestic drama of the Mass, and unfortunately for all too many it is only that—a drama, a spectacle, in which the priest is the sole actor and the congregation but a passive audience.

It is bound to be so as long as this greatest of prayers remains in an alien tongue. The pattern of our prayers follows the pattern of our thoughts. The ordinary Catholic does not think in Latin, and he cannot pray in Latin. Even though he use a Missal and follow the English translation, he still feels a looker-on, as though a restrictive circle had been drawn about the altar. He is in his Father's House, and his Father's language is not his own.

It was not so in the early Church. There the Mass was truly a community act of worship. The prayers were in the vernacular—Latin or Greek or Coptic or Syriac, as the case might be. All took part, an intelligent part, in the prayers and chanting. All received Holy Communion. Membership in the Mystical Body of Christ was vividly exemplified. The word *offeramus* had real meaning.

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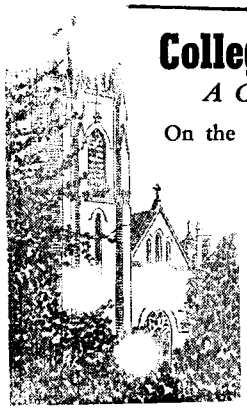

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or morals. It is urely a matter of discipline. For several years Father H. A. Reinhold and others have been carrying on a crusade, in the pages of *Orate Fratres* and other Catholic reviews, for a return of the vernacular to the Mass. Their objective to have the so-called public parts of the Mass (Introit, Gloria, Epistle, Gospel, etc.) in the vernacular. The secret parts of the Mass, recited inaudibly by the celebrant, would be retained in Latin. What this would mean to the faithful can partially be guaged by the enthusiasm with which they join in the prayers and hymns at popular devotions.

In grade school we were taught that it is not necessary for the Mass to be in our mother tongue, because the priest in the Mass is praying to God, not to the people. It all became a bit confusing the following year, when we learned that the first part of the Mass, the Mass of the Catechumens, is a "service of prayer and instruction," preparatory to the Mass of the Faithful. Instruction? In Latin?

But what of the objections that unchangeable truths must be preserved in an unchangeable tongue, and that the Universal Church needs a universal language? Those are both excellent arguments for the use of Latin in official books, documents, and clerical intercourse. But as for the Mass . . . well, Shakespeare still is pretty intelligible after 400 years, and surely once in four centuries wouldn't be too often for a revision of the Mass prayers in the vernacular.

Many good and learned churchmen oppose the introduction of the vernacular into the liturgy, on the score of tradition, and because the laboriously popularized Gregorian chant would not lend itself easily to a living language. The latter objection sounds a bit like the tail wagging the dog—but let me disclaim any desire to be apodictic. The purpose of these lines is to propose a point for thought and discussion, not to set myself up as a self-constituted authority.

Christ rules His Church through His Vicar, the Bishop of Rome, and all Bishops in communion with the Holy See. By divine institution our religious governance is from above. It is for the flock to follow the shepherd, not to seek their own pastures to their own destruction.

Nevertheless, when it is not a matter of faith nor morals, there can be and there have been "grass-roots" movements in the Church. In matters purely of policy or discipline, when the aspirations and longings of the laity are articulated in sufficient strength and by sufficient numbers, they do not go unnoted nor unanswered by Popes and Bishops.

LEO J. TRESE.

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